

You Can Pick Your Message, But You Can't Pick Your Audience

Usually, when public speaking opportunities arise, you cannot choose your audience. If you are lucky, your audience will positively respond to your message, but sometimes your audience will be resistant to your ideas. Because of this, you must learn to adapt your speech to different types of audiences, in order to reach as many different groups as possible.

Directions:

First, read the situation below. Then review each type of audience and discuss with your group how to adapt the situation to each audience. Use the discussion questions to guide your group. Be sure to write your ideas on a separate piece of paper.

Situation:

You are representing your college as a student government member. Your goal is to convince your audience that allowing the college to sell alcohol at some locations on campus would be for the benefit for everyone involved, including the community surrounding the campus, students, faculty, administration, and parents of students. Each of these groups should respond to alcohol on campus in a different way. Your group needs to figure out how to best account for these different audience responses.

Audiences:

1. The community surrounding the campus
2. The students
3. The faculty
4. The administration
5. The parents of students

Things to discuss with your group:

1. Would your audience have a negative reaction?
2. If so, how would you change this type of reaction?
3. What would be the main points of your speech?
4. Would you discuss those issues that the audience would not support? Why/why not?